



Envision Arlington Standing Committee

Date: June 13, 2019
Time: 7:30 PM
Location: Town Hall Annex, First Floor Conference Room

Minutes

Attendance: Juli Brazile, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Sue Doctrow, Greg Christiana, Kelly Lynema, Jen Toole.

Absent: Schott Lever, Cindy Starks.

Guest: Beth Benedikt

1. Introductions and Farewells to Members Stepping Down
For the benefit of our guest, there were introductions, followed by a brief farewell celebration for Cindy Starks and Jennifer Toole who are stepping down as Standing Committee Members.
2. Approval of Minutes
The minutes of the April 11, 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved.
3. Budget Review
Juli reviewed the FY2019 spending and the FY2020 budgeting. The budget was drawn from previous spending patterns and developed in consultation with each of the Task Groups. The Committee is requested funds to be rolled over for specific projects of the Fiscal Resources and Diversity Task Groups to make the \$3,000 budget workable. The final amount we can spend next year will be \$3800.
4. Visioning for Envision Arlington
Juli relayed that those present at the May meeting (there was not a quorum) focused on a protocol to convene discussions on the nine original Town Goals established in the 1990s. Yet, the practical problems and efficacy of such an effort have been called into question by a few members over the past few weeks. The Standing Committee may better serve Arlington by focusing on community engagement and encouraging collaborations so we will be more immediately engaged and directly impactful in the community.

The 1993 Town Goals have outdated wording in places. It was proposed that we meet with the Advisory Board and Task Groups to discuss proposing a few simple revisions and then leaving those as a historical reference. The Master Plan document prints the Town Goals

and then includes a "Vision for Arlington" that identifies a wide range of topics that can be addressed in the Master Plan. That vision was the result of the public engagement during the Master Plan process and is itself an updated statement of a community vision. (attached) The major focus on the 1993 Town Goals that is missing from the Master Plan vision statement is Governance. Diversity is not called out directly.

As a model of modern civic engagement, Kelly brought up a program in Portsmouth called *New Hampshire Listens*. The program is run through an independent group that provides a neutral forum to compile reports and develop plans for the city. Greg relayed the importance of facilitating neutral person-to-person engagement as a vehicle to reduce tribalism and increase participation in public decision-making.

Other online resources for civic engagement were discussed, including *dem.tools*, *MetroQuest* and *CommunityVis*. Some of these are open source; others are paid services. Whatever tools are used would need to be adaptable to Arlington. Committee members agreed to review the Envision Arlington web page with respect to reducing the prominence of the Town Goals and explore the resources brought up at the meeting for ideas on additional civic engagement. A meeting to follow up on this exploration may be scheduled this summer.

5. New Business

Kelly introduced a proposal to establish a Complete Count Working Group in support of the 2020 Census in Arlington. The Massachusetts Secretary of State is asking every city and large town to form these groups, and Envision Arlington is being asked to play a part. The Working Group will be comprised of local government and community leaders and organizations, with a focus on raising community awareness, communicating facts about the census, developing local outreach plans for hard-to-count populations and ensuring that an accurate count is made. Kelly will be requesting the Select Board's approval to form the Working Group at their next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.